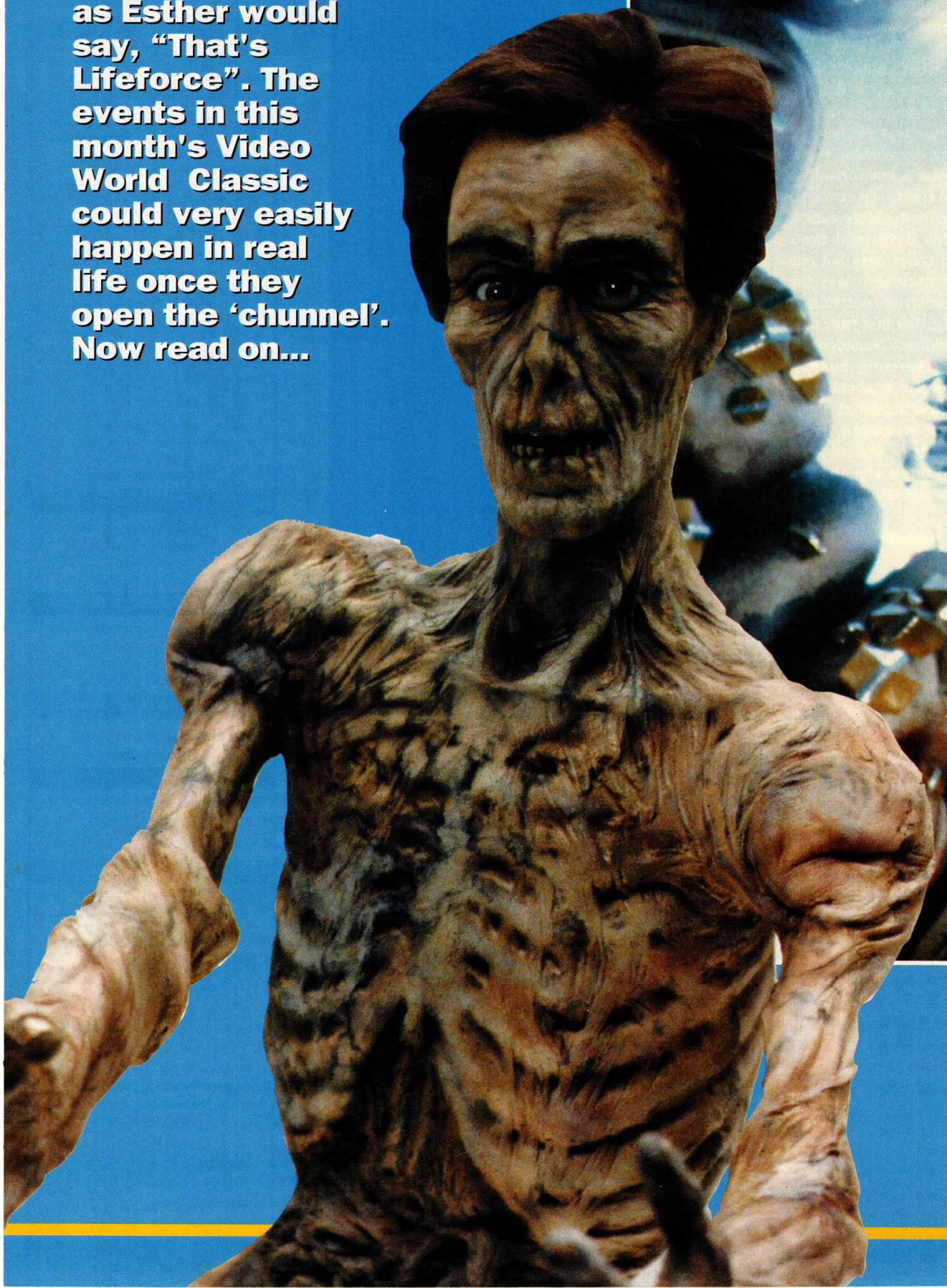


VIDEO WORLD CLASSIC

London is overrun by zombies, and controlling the invasion is a beautiful nude space vampiress. Yes, as Esther would say, "That's Lifeforce". The events in this month's Video World Classic could very easily happen in real life once they open the 'chunnel'. Now read on...





LIFEFORCE

Terrifying Tobe (pronounced Toby) Hooper first became a favourite with horror fans the world over when he made a chilling little low budget flick named *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* back in 1974. Since then he has largely failed to live up to the promise he showed with his terrifying debut feature. But our Tobe has nevertheless been responsible for some very interesting genre pictures and the rousing sci-fi vampire movie *Lifeforce* is one of them.

First released to UK cinemas in 1985, *Lifeforce* is an amazing, completely barmy \$25 million film version of Gavin Wilson's

acclaimed novel, *Space Vampires*. It's incredible that Hooper managed to get Cannon Pictures to stump up such a large amount of dosh for what turns out to be nothing more (or less) than a mega bucks re-make of Hammer's *Quatermass And The Pit*. The result was dubbed by one wag as, 'everything you would imagine a \$25 million Cannon movie would look like,' and you really can't argue with that.

In fact, it's a real hoot, but it's also terrific entertainment from the word go. The film begins as a joint US/UK space mission heads



out to examine Halley's Comet. Their mission is diverted, however, when they discover a strange spaceship. Upon examining the vessel they discover several naked beings in suspended animation, one of whom is the very alluring Mathilda May (who later went 'respectable' for the sexy arthouse flick, *Naked Tango*).

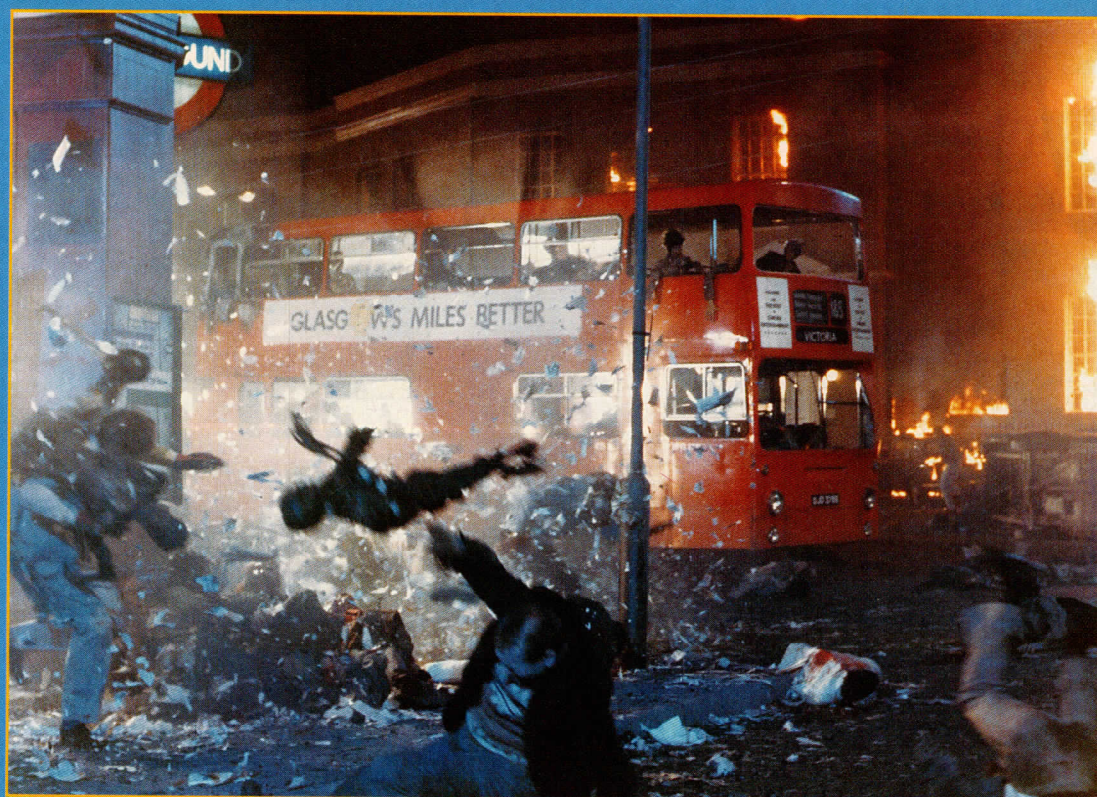
Of course they decide to take the aliens home for closer examination. But once aboard the Earth ship, all hell breaks loose and all the astronauts are killed except for hero Steve Railsback, who escapes via an emergency craft. The strange creatures make their way to Earth as well and are examined in London at a space research centre.

It is there that the sexy 'space girl' (May) revives and proceeds to suck the life out of an unfortunate scientist, who shrivels into a mummified corpse. Still naked, May then wanders the streets of London looking for more victims. Meanwhile, an autopsy is performed on her victim and in the middle of the procedure the withered

corpse sits up and sucks the life out of the pathologist, thus re-inflating itself, though hopelessly insane. The man is locked up and behaves like a caged animal until he explodes into a heap of ashes, hurling himself against the bars of his cell.

These strange instances arouse the

attention of British security and shortly afterwards special agent Peter Firth turns up to slap a 'D'-notice on the situation (has David Mellor heard of these?) and instigates a search for the naked space girl, who is still wandering discreetly around town sucking the life out of lucky blokes.



Railsback is called in to lend his expertise (because he seems to have developed a psychic link with May) and also on hand is eccentric scientist Frank Finlay, who has deduced that the aliens are vampires from space whose mission is to drain the life force of any planet they happen across.

Eventually the problem hits London like an epidemic and there is large scale destruction in the streets (well sort of, but if you look closely it appears that it's the same 25 people running back and forth), while zombies stalk about and the skies overhead go crazy with strange and violent atmospheric changes that would be enough to give Michael Fish a coronary.

If you wanted to be picky about it, you could explain that *Lifeforce* has no character development, no thematic development and not much narrative development. But who cares? What it does have is Mathilda May in the buff and lots of brill special effects (courtesy of animatronics genius Nick Maley) depicting mummified zombies being splattered, heads exploding and people disintegrating before your very eyes.



It is also interesting to see *Star Trek*'s Patrick Stewart in an early role as a weird doctor who gets taken over by the aliens and Frank Finlay giving the performance of his career as another mad medico who chuckles "Here we go!" as his bonce

explodes and he gets sucked up through the stratosphere. Check *Lifeforce* out on the Guild Home Video label today. We can honestly say that it's the best zombie movie that Henry Mancini ever wrote the music for!

